

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 388

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

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SUBJ: PRESIDENT LOPEZ PRESS CONFERENCE IN QUITO AUG 23

1. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE WITH COLOMBIAN AND ECUADORIAN REPORTERS AUGUST 23, PRESIDENT LOPEZ DISCUSSED THREE TOPICS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN TERMS OF US-COLOMBIAN RELATIONS IMPORTANCE: A) LOS MATTERS; B) HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES DURING SEPTEMBER; C) AND THE ANDEAN PACT. A SUMMARY OF THESE ITEMS FOLLOWS:

2. LOS- LOPEZ PRAISED ECUADOR, PERU, AND CHILE FOR PIONEERING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 200 MILE TERRITOTIAL WATERS CONCEPT, WHICH, HE SAID, IS NOW INVOLVING DISCUSSIONS BY ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES. HE CHARACTERIZED THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND ECUADOR DELINEATING THEIR BOUNDARIES OUT TO THE 200 MILES IN THE PACIFIC OCEANN AS SHOWING MORE MATURITY THAN THE SO-CALLED DEVELOPED NATIONS (USING THE UK AND FRANCE AS AN EXAMPLE) WHICH HAVE HAD TO SUBMIT THEIR TERRITORILA WATERS CLAIMS TO INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION. ASKED IF THE ECUADOR-COLOMBIAN ACCORD RESULTING FROM THE TWO-DAY METINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT LOPEZ AND

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ECUADORIAN PRESIDENT ROFRIGUEZ INDICATED THAT COLOMBIA HAD

DECIDED TO DEFEND THE THESIS OF 200 MILE TERRITORIAL WATERS JURISDICTION, LOPEZ RESPONDED: "THE QUESTION OF THE 200 MILES HAS VARIOUS CONCEPTS, DETERMINED BY DIFFERING VIEWS OF EACH COUNTRY. FOR EXAMPLE, ECUADOR EXTENDS ITS TERRITORIAL AREA TO 200 MILES, WE, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE DIFFICULTIES RELATED TO THE CARIBBEAN SEA WHICH HAS A CONFIGURATION COMPLETELY DISTINCT FROM THAT OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN, HAVE A 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA LIMIT AND 188 MILES OF PATRIMONIAL SEAS. THAT IS TO SAY, WE CLAIM THE RESOURCES OF THE SEA, BUT PERMIT THE INNOCENT PASSAGE OF SHIPS AND DO NOT EXERCISE THE COMPLETE RIGHTS OF A STATE IN ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS; AMONG OTHER REASONS BECAUSE WE DO NOT POSSESS THE MEANS TO PATROL 200 MILES IN THE ATLANTIC AND THE PACIFIC...IN THE 188 MILES (OF PATRIMONIAL WATERS) WE CLAIM OUR RIGHTS TO THE RESOURCES BUT WE WILL NOT EXERCISE TOTAL SUPERVISION." LOPEZ STATED THAT THE ECUADOR-COLOMBIA MARITIME ACCORD WILL SERVE AS THE MODEL FOR DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND 16 OTHER NATIONS (CARIBBEAN SEA COUNTRIES) WHICH HE HOPES TO BEGIN SHORTLY. FINALLY, LOPEZ HOPED THAT THE COLOMBIAN LEGISLATURE WILL APPROVE THE ACCORD PRIOR TO THE END OF THE CURRENT CONGRESSIONAL SESSION DECEMBER 16.

3. VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. - LOPEZ STATED THAT ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS OF DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT FORD WOULD BE THE COMMERCIAL LAW OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE PROBLEMS IT IS CAUSING VENEZUELA AND ECUADOR AS WELL AS THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER COUNTRIES. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD NOT BE VISITING OTHER COUNTRIES IN TRANSIT BETWEEN BOGOTA AND WASHINGTON.

4. ANDEAN PACT - LOPEZ STATED THAT HE IS A STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF THE ANDEAN PACT AND ESPECIALLY ARTICLE 24 (SETTING LIMITS ON FOREIGN CAPITAL). AS AN EXAMPLE OF COLOMBIA'S SUPPORT FOR ARTICLE 24, LOPEZ SAID : "WE HAVE FIXED A PERIOD FOR FOREIGN-OWNED BANKS TO CONVERT THEMSELVES INTO MIXED ENTERPRISES OR TO CEASE ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY ... IN THIS REGARD WE HAVE FOR THE MOST PART HAD FAVORABLE RESPONSES AND EXPECT WITHIN A YEAR THAT THERE WILL NOT BE ANY BANKS IN WHICH THERE IS NOT COLOMBIAN PARTICIPATION. THUS OUR SAVINGS WILL NOT FINANCE FOREIGN ENTERPRISES."

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